



NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

October 1, 2014

ROGER GOODELL
Commissioner

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
U.S. Senate
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Boxer,

I received your letter of September 11th regarding the response of the National Football League to the domestic violence incident involving Ray Rice. I appreciate your concern, and I share your view that the NFL must make clear that domestic violence will not be tolerated. At its best, the NFL sets an example and projects important values that have a positive impact on our society well beyond professional football. As I previously have stated, the league's handling of the Ray Rice matter fell short in meeting that goal, and I take full responsibility for that failure. I have taken a number of steps to improve our practices and to ensure that our actions in the future properly reflect and reaffirm our values. These steps are based on a clear, simple principle: domestic violence and sexual assault are wrong, illegal, and unacceptable, under any circumstances.

First, the league has engaged with nationally recognized experts to help review, shape, and enhance the league's policies and programs related to domestic violence and sexual assault, from evaluation, to intervention, to stronger penalties. This group of experts includes Lisa Friel, Peter Harvey, Tony Porter, Jane Randel, and Rita Smith. Ms. Friel previously served as the head of the Sex Crimes Prosecution Unit in the New York County District Attorney's Office for more than a decade. Mr. Harvey served as the Attorney General of New Jersey and thoroughly revised the state's approach to these offenses. Mr. Porter is an author, an internationally recognized advocate of ending violence against women and promoting healthy, respectful manhood, and the co-founder and co-director of A CALL TO MEN: The Next Generation of Manhood. Ms. Randel is the co-founder of NO MORE, a national initiative to raise awareness and understanding of domestic violence and sexual assault. Ms. Smith is the former executive director of the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence. We expect to identify and add additional experts to our team in the coming weeks and months.

These outside experts have helped us to develop a comprehensive educational program related to domestic violence and sexual assault, which we are reviewing with the NFL Players Association and will begin presenting to all NFL personnel within

30 days. This education will be mandatory for players and coaches, management and administrative personnel, and also available to families and significant others. Apart from general education on these subjects, we will provide specialized training for appropriate personnel to identify those at risk and provide prompt and confidential counseling and other intervention. This will include making sure that all spouses and significant others are aware of the confidential assistance available through clubs, the NFL, or independent local resources. As you know from your work on this issue, a critical step is to encourage victims and abusers to seek assistance early, and the availability of private, confidential intervention is an important resource. Where an incident is reported, we will work to provide confidential support for victims and families.

Second, where people involved in the NFL engage in unacceptable conduct, we will strongly condemn and punish that behavior. As announced in my August 28, 2014, letter to the team owners, I have implemented enhanced disciplinary consequences for violations of the league's Personal Conduct Policy that include domestic violence and sexual assault. The new sanctions include banishment from the league. We now are engaged in a comprehensive review of issues relating to the investigation, assessment, and punishment of violations; professional assistance to employees, their families, and victims of domestic violence or sexual assault; and early intervention programs that seek to prevent these incidents from occurring in the first place. In undertaking this review, I am seeking advice and information from a wide range of sources and will work closely with the NFL Players Association and its leadership on issues affecting NFL players. My goal will be to ensure that the league implements the most effective balance of evaluation, treatment, family support, and punishment; that we have full information on best practices; and that we share our own work with others to elevate the level of response to these crimes.

Third, I am establishing a new committee that will regularly review and update all of the league's current rules, policies, and procedures related to the personal conduct of club personnel, owners, and players across the board. This conduct committee will work to ensure that the league maintains clear and current rules, fair and transparent procedures, and the highest standards.

Fourth, the league will expand the educational components in our college, high school, and youth football programs that address domestic violence and sexual assault. We will create and promote programs that develop the character of the young men who play, coach, or manage the game, emphasizing respect for others, including women, and

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
October 1, 2014
Page 3

appropriate ways to resolve conflict. We also will incorporate domestic violence and sexual assault awareness into our public service work. We recognize that domestic violence and sexual assault are broad social issues, affecting millions of people from all backgrounds and walks of life. We want our public role to be constructive, effective, and far-reaching.

Finally, as you may know, the League recently pledged to provide financial, operational, and promotional support during the next five years to the National Domestic Violence Hotline (the Hotline), and to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC). The Hotline is a critical service for victims nationwide, and the resources we provide will be used to help ensure that every incoming phone call and text message is answered promptly. Already the Hotline is in the process of hiring an additional 20 full-time advocates, which will permit it to serve as many as 800 additional callers each day. Similarly, our support for NSVRC will increase the capacity of state and local sexual assault hotlines across the country.

These steps are by no means the end of our work. We will continue to engage with experts and advocates to expand and develop long-term programs that raise awareness, educate, and reduce domestic violence and sexual assault both within the NFL and in our society. We recognize that domestic violence and sexual assault are serious issues that we cannot solve by ourselves. But we are committed to doing our part to make a positive and significant difference.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Roger Goodell", written in a cursive style.

ROGER GOODELL

ROGER GOODELL
Commissioner